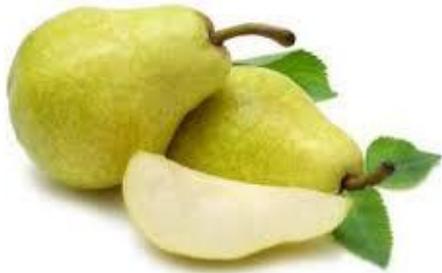


Newsletter – Sunday 20th March 2022



Williams Bon Chretien pears

Ezra 7: 10 “Ezra had devoted himself to the study and observance of the Law of the LORD, and to teaching its decrees and laws in Israel.”

Matthew 23: 1 – 36

1. Am I helping people enter God’s kingdom or am I hindering them?
2. Is my life consistent with my words?
3. Do I honour God with integrity?
4. Am I focused on justice, mercy, and faithfulness, or am I obsessed with trivia?
5. Is my inner life pleasing to God or am I hiding secret darkness?
6. Are we busy keeping up appearances while hiding moral rot in our lives?
7. Do I receive God’s Word from others with a teachable heart and mind?

(Mark Keown, SU notes, Jan 2022)

Matthew 5:20 "Unless your righteousness surpasses that of the Pharisees and the teachers of the Law, you will certainly not enter the kingdom of heaven."

Galatians 2:20 "I have been crucified with Christ and I no longer live, but Christ lives in me. The life I live in the body, I live by faith in the Son of God who loved me and gave Himself for me."

Matthew 23:11-12 "The greatest among you will be your servant. For whoever exalts himself will be humbled, and whoever humbles himself will be exalted."

Ps 139: 23,24 "Search me O God and know my heart; test me and know my anxious thoughts. See if there is any offensive way in me and lead me in the way everlasting."

Questions for further study

Read Luke 11: 37 – 54 (a parallel passage to Matthew 23)

1. What are the superficial things that offend us?
2. How do we make it difficult for people to come to Christ?
3. What are the equivalents to the "important seats in the synagogue" for us?
4. "Justice, mercy and faithfulness" (Matthew 23:23) summarise God's agenda for society, underprivilege and religion. How better can these become our priorities?
5. Discuss these statements:
 - a. "When religion is all rules, our natural reaction is to make others aware of how well we keep the rules."
 - b. "If holiness is understood without righteousness, it can only be a religious preoccupation. However, if there is only righteousness without holiness, it quickly becomes moralism and legalism."

News

Mission Newsflash – Afghanistan currently tops the list of most dangerous places to be a Christian. The church is small and hidden, as it is impossible to live openly as a Christian. Believers risk being killed or persecuted by their kin or the Taliban, or forcibly sectioned to a psychiatric hospital. Covid-19 and drought add to their troubles.

Pray for our Christian brothers and sisters that they will find the Peace and Hope that is ours in Christ and that God will protect and provide for them.